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ABSTRACT

Research results are presented on the participation of black women students in sports at the "Big Ten" universities. A survey was conducted to determine whether their percentage reflects their proportion in the undergraduate population, whether their percentage as recipients of athletic aid reflects their proportion as intercollegiate participants, and whether they are clustered in certain sports as participants and as recipients of athletic-based aid. Results of the survey are presented in tabular form, and an analysis of results is offered. (JD)

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# STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN IN SPORTS AT THE BIG TEN INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

BARCLAY, V.M. Status of black women in sports among selected institutions of higher education. M.A. in Physical Education. The University of Iowa, 1979.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of the involvement of black women in the intercollegiate programs of the "Big Ten" institutions. On the basis of the data obtained, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Since at nine of ten "Big Ten" institutions, black women athletes existed in smaller numbers (4.03%) than their percentage in the campus population (6.02%) would predict, there appears to be a need for affirmative efforts aimed at identifying, informing, and encouraging black women into athletic programs.
2. Since black women received athletic grants in greater numbers (6.35%) than their percentage in the athletic population (4.03%) would predict, and since they were much more likely to receive full grants in basketball and track and field than were their white counterparts, it appears that the talents of those who find their way into athletics are recognized and rewarded.
3. The clustering of black women in basketball and track and field, and near or total exclusion from other sports may reflect a combination of stereotype and opportunity or lack thereof.

"STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN IN SPORTS
AT THE BIG TEN INSTITUTIONS"

By Vranda M. Barclay

Women's participation in sports has increased as they have demanded that society begins to accept them in all areas of human endeavor. Two questions that need answering are how many of these new athletes are blacks, and has the participation of black women in sport received sufficient attention? Such attention is important as noted in the comment of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that "recognition is a part of the dominant impulse--the basic drive of human life," along with "the desire for attention, the desire to be important, and the desire to be first." (McAfee, 1970).

Bill Rhoden (1977) stated that the position of black female athletes can be described as "a fruitful past, but a shaky future. . ." (p. 60). It is unlikely that one could ever forget about the black female "superstars" of the past, such as Wilma Rudolph and Althea Gibson (Smythe, 1976). They have established themselves as role models for future black women athletes, but there is a need to constantly replace these retiring role models. Black women must continue to be visible so that young girls as well as young boys may have role models.

It is important that the human talents developed in sport be recognized. When a particular group does not participate, talents are not discovered. If we can identify those areas of sport where black women are underrepresented, than perhaps an effective program can be developed to end that underrepresentation.

Since most sports opportunities in this country are provided through

the schools, it is important to study our educational institutions. In my survey research, I have selected to study the "Status of Black Women in Sports" on a regional level--specifically, the "Big Ten" institutions. I thought it would be appropriate to determine the following for Black women athletes:

1. Whether their percentage reflects their proportion in the undergraduate population.
2. Whether their percentage as recipients of athletic aid reflects their proportion as intercollegiate participants, and
3. Whether they are clustered in certain sports as participants and as recipients of athletic based aid.

Part of the results of my survey shown in Table 1, indicate the number of women athletes by racial category at each institution. The data in Table 2 revealed that there was a relatively low percentage of black women athletes compared to their proportion of the undergraduate population. The results show that 6.02 percent of the female enrollment among the "Big Ten" institutions are black women, 90.79 percent white women, and 3.19 percent other minority women.

Among the women athletes, 4.03 percent are black, 95.20 percent are white, and .77 percent are other minority women. These figures indicate that compared to the available pool, black women athletes are underrepresented at all but one of the Big Ten institutions (i.e. Institution J). The pattern of underrepresentation differs from institution to institution. The greatest underrepresentation generally appears among institutions with the largest black female undergraduate enrollment.

Table 1

Number of Female Athletes by Racial Category

| Institution | n Black | n White | n Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3 | 162 | 0 |
| B | 15 | 202 | 0 |
| C | 2 | 88 | 0 |
| D | 15 | 195 | 1 |
| E | 5 | 128 | 1 |
| F | 2 | 131 | 0 |
| G | 3 | 174 | 1 |
| H | 9 | 139 | 5 |
| I | 5 | 225 | 1 |
| J | 14 | 279 | 5 |
| Total | 73 | 1723 | 14 |

Table 2

Percentage of College Enrollment Compared to the Percentage of Athletic Participation of Women by Racial Category

| Institution | % Black Women Enrollment | % Black Women Athletes | % White Women Enrollment | % White Women Athletes | % Other Women Enrollment | % Other Women Athletes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 5.67 | 1.82 | 91.22 | 98.18 | 3.11 | 0.00 |
| B | 7.13 | 6.45 | 91.36 | 93.55 | 1.50 | 0.00 |
| C | 11.61 | 4.35 | 85.14 | 95.65 | 3.25 | 0.00 |
| D | 11.02 | 7.11 | 86.73 | 92.42 | 2.25 | 0.47 |
| E | 3.88 | 3.73 | 93.33 | 95.52 | 2.78 | 0.75 |
| F | 5.09 | 1.50 | 84.21 | 98.50 | 10.69 | 0.00 |
| G | 2.60 | 1.69 | 94.66 | 97.75 | 2.74 | 0.56 |
| H | 8.20 | 5.92 | 88.74 | 91.45 | 3.06 | 2.63 |
| I | 2.32 | 2.16 | 94.98 | 96.97 | 2.70 | 0.86 |
| J | 2.83 | 4.38 | 95.37 | 93.94 | 1.80 | 1.68 |
| Total | 6.02 | 4.03 | 90.79 | 95.20 | 3.19 | 0.77 |

From Table 3, it can be seen that black women are participants in the following sports: badminton, basketball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, field hockey, and softball. However, there were no black women participants in cross-country, golf, gymnastics, synchronized swimming, fencing, and crew. Track and field, basketball, and badminton are shown to have a representation of black women participants in excess of their 4.03 percentage in the population of athletes when compared to their undergraduate enrollment population. On the other hand, swimming, tennis, cross-country, golf, gymnastics, synchronized swimming, fencing, and crew have an underrepresentation of black women participants.

Table 4 represents the racial composition among the athletic scholarship holders. Out of 614 scholarship holders, black women were the recipients of 39 or 6.35 percent; 573 or 93.32 percent are white recipients, and 4 or .65 percent are other minority women recipients. These data show that in terms of percentage, black women are receiving more athletic scholarships than their percentage as intercollegiate participants. This appears to be a positive factor, which indicates that although 90 percent of the Big Ten institutions have an underrepresentation of black women athletes, black women have been receiving scholarships for their athletic talents. However, since black women were not distributed as participants across the spectrum of intercollegiate sports, it can be seen from Table 5 that black women were not recipients of athletic-based aid in all of the sports offerings.

In closing, data detailing the racial and sexual composition of athletic programs and granting of scholarships are rare. The information I have presented indicates that while the talents of black women athletes do appear to be being recognized through awarding of scholarships, there is a need to develop and/or reach greater numbers of black female athletes. There

Table 3

Racial Distribution of Women Athletes in Various Sports

| Sport | n Women Athletes | n Black Women Athletes | % of Total | n White Women Athletes | % of Total | n Other Women Athletes | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badminton | 14 | 1 | 7.00%** | 12 | 87.00% | 1 | 7.00%** |
| Basketball | 162 | 15 | 9.30%** | 147 | 90.70% | 0 | * |
| Cross-Country | 151 | 0 | * | 151 | 100.00% | 0 | * |
| Golf | 125 | 0 | * | 125 | 100.00% | 0 | * |
| Gymnastics | 97 | 0 | * | 95 | 98.00% | 2 | 2.00%* |
| Swimming | 255 | 1 | 0.39%* | 254 | 99.60% | 0 | * |
| Tennis | 127 | 1 | 0.79%* | 125 | 98.40% | 1 | 0.79%* |
| Track & Field | 272 | 44 | 16.00%** | 225 | 83.00% | 3 | 1.10%* |
| Volleyball | 155 | 4 | 3.00%* | 149 | 96.00% | 2 | 1.30%* |
| Field Hockey | 152 | 3 | 2.00%* | 148 | 97.30% | 1 | 0.66%* |
| Softball | 185 | 4 | 2.00%* | 178 | 96.20% | 3 | 1.62%* |
| Synchronized Swimming | 45 | 0 | * | 45 | 100.00% | 0 | * |
| Fencing | 15 | 0 | * | 14 | 93.00% | 1 | 6.60%** |
| Crew | 55 | 0 | * | 55 | 100.00% | 0 | * |
| TOTAL | 1810 | 73 | 4.03%* | 1723 | 95.20 | 14 | 0.77%* |

* Sports showing an underrepresentation of minority athletes.

** Sports showing an overrepresentation of minority athletes.

Table 4

Racial Distribution of Athletic-Based Aid Compared

to the Racial Distribution of Women Athletes

| Racial Groups of Athletes | n Women Athletes | % Women Athletes | n Athletic Scholarship Holders | % Athletic Scholarship Holders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black | 73 | 4.03%* | 39 | 6.35%** |
| White | 1723 | 95.20% | 573 | 93.32% |
| Other | 14 | 0.77%* | 4 | 0.65%* |
| TOTALS | 1810 | 100.00% | 614 | 100.00% |

* = Underrepresentation of minority women athletes.

** = Overrepresentation of athletic scholarships.

Table 5

Racial Breakdown of Women Athletic Scholarship Recipients in the Various Sports

| Sport | Total Athletic Scholarships | Black Women on Scholarship | | | | White Women on Scholarship | | | | Other Minority on Scholarship | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | FG-N | FG-% | PG-N | PG-% | FG-N | FG-% | PG-N | PG-% | FG-N | FG-% | PG-N | PG-% |
| Badminton | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Basketball | 76 | 3 | 60.0 | 2 | 40.0 | 22 | 31.0 | 49 | 69.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cross-Country | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7.6 | 28 | 93.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Golf | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 29.0 | 22 | 71.0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| Gymnastics | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 14.6 | 35 | 85.4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| Swimming | 73 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8.3 | 66 | 91.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tennis | 42 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 17.0 | 34 | 83.0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| Track & Field | 83 | 13 | 52.0 | 12 | 48.0 | 11 | 19.3 | 46 | 81.0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| Volleyball | 84 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 100.0 | 13 | 16.7 | 65 | 83.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Field Hockey | 79 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 12.7 | 69 | 87.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Softball | 60 | 1 | 33.0 | 2 | 67.0 | 11 | 19.3 | 46 | 80.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Synchronized Swimming | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 100.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fencing | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 100.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Crew | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 100.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 614 | 18 | 46.0 | 21 | 54.0 | 97 | 17.0 | 476 | 83.0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 |

FG = Full Grant

PG = Partial Grant

is a further need to widen the choices of sports in which black female athletes are developing talents. This points to a need for early identification and talent development programs.

Thank-you

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